

#3

\$1



FOOD  
GEEK

# F o o d   G e e k   # 3

Food Geek is a little zine that is all about people telling us a thing or two regarding something they know/love/cook/obsess on that revolves around food. It thrives on the power of the contributor. I'd like to give 'em all their proper respects. Y'all rock! You might want to check out the zines that most of them do. Follow on...

These people do comics: **Shawn Granton**, PMB 296, [redacted] Ave, San Francisco, CA 94111 (10 Foot Rule and Modern Industry-\$2) **Billy McKay**, [redacted], N. Olmsted, OH 44070 (Tile and Invisible Robot Fish-\$1) **Helga Romoser**, [redacted], El Cerrito, CA 94530-2340 (Gag Reflex-\$2) **Delaine Derry**, [redacted] Road, Birmingham AL 35213 (Not My Small Diary-\$2) **Andy Robinson**, [redacted] Suite 302, Portland, OR 97213-1305 (various mini comics-\$2) **Anne Thalheimer**, [redacted], Newark, DE 19711 (Booty-\$2) These people do other zines: **Violet Jones**, [redacted], Haywood, CA 94545 (Spunk-\$1) **Emily Greenwalt**, [redacted], St Louis, MO 63116 (Chronicles of Disgust-\$1) **Eric Lyden**, [redacted], Brockton, MA 02301 (Fish With Legs-\$1) **Heather Seggel** doesn't do a zine but she writes for various publications like Bitch and Eidos. **Sarah Folkman** doesn't do a zine either but she is frequently forced to contribute to zines that I do and she's a fabulous screenwriter in real life.

If you have a comic or a story about food then consider becoming a contributor yourself!

Food Geek #3. \$1 ppd. **Carrie McNinch**, [redacted] Los Angeles CA 90048 [redacted]@hotmail.com

## Carrie Rambles About Whatever...

Today I stopped at the Indian take out food place next to the Trader Joe's that I was about to do some shopping in. I perused the menu that was posted conveniently on the window, and thought I'd give this place a try. I gleefully walked in and ordered the aloo mateer lunch special (\$4.99). I paid and told her I'd come back and pick up my food after I was done grocery shopping. That I did. I drove home enjoying the scents emitting from that styrofoam container in a plastic bag sitting on my passenger seat. I'm home. I open the container. What the flipping A? I'm not looking at any peas. I don't see any potatoes. I'm looking at eggplant on one side and mixed veggies in a tomatoey sauce on the other. Oh wait. There are about 6 or 7 peas. What the heck?!!!! THIS IS NOT WHAT I ORDERED!!!! Then my eyes glance over to the pile of rice. Rice. Me. I love rice. Passionately love rice. And I know my rice believe you me! What I'm staring at is a pile of cheap white 39 cents for a pound bag generic grocery store icky gross rice!!! Excuse me for a second but where is the lush, grown in the fertile soil at the foothills of the Himalayas, long grain, enchantingly fragrant, basmati rice? Not here! Basmati is supposed to come with Indian food. Everyone knows that. This rice is the crap I had to buy in small town Maryland because it was all I could find until I discovered a store that sold short grain Japanese calrose. Okay...insult me and give me the wrong order, with veggies that weren't fresh to begin with (they were the frozen type that come with lima beans!). I can deal with that. Really. But insult me by a mound of globby, cheap, mushy, white rice when I'm expecting my basmati?!?! Don't even think of it! My day has been seriously screwed with...lesson here. Always check your take out food order before leaving the establishment.

Remember last issue I talked of anti depressants and the effect on the appetite? In specific I mentioned that Remeron had made me gain 15 pounds (25 was more like it). Ain't nothing like having



problems in the brain chemistry, then looking at yourself in the mirror to see this bloated face looking back at you that had to go out and buy pants another size up, to make one feel even shittier. And I said I had stopped the gain-weight-easier-than-breathing pill. Next up was Wellbutrin. Wellbutrin is a good thing. It's the first antidepressant that I've taken in which I could say that I'm getting results. No bad side effects whatsoever. My appetite has remained normal. I also made a serious decision to lose all that extra weight. And it worked! After 6 months of lots of exercise and careful diet watching (i.e. very little carbohydrates in the form of bread or pasta... which was really easy to do and you'll understand why once you read the next paragraph). Moral here. Do NOT take Remeron unless you need to gain weight.

Wheat sensitive. Ever hear of it? I hadn't. I mean, I once worked in a health food store and I knew some people bought bread made out of rice or pasta made out of corn because they couldn't eat wheat. I never thought about why. For the last 3 years I had this reoccurring stomach thing. My stomach would burn. It was painful. Not in an ouch I have a cut way, but in a really unpleasant and super uncomfortable way. My digestive system gave me problems. Sometimes the burn would get so bad that it caused this reaction where I had but 4 seconds to run to the bathroom to toss my cookies. Sometimes after eating I felt really cranky. I would also get lethargic and had a difficult time thinking. I started to suspect both pasta and bread because it was after eating those items my stomach gave me hell. I was confused though. It also happened after other meals too. I decided to cut out all breads and pasta about 1/2 year ago. It disappeared. Completely. No digestive problems. I decided to reintroduce these items back into my diet. Digestive problems back like clockwork. 2-3 hours after consuming anything made out of wheat, there it was. I did a little research and found out that wheat sensitivity does indeed exist. It is a chronic digestive disorder called celiac disease where one can not metabolize gliadin, which is a



protein component of gluten. It can damage the short intestine, which prevents the body from absorbing nutrients. Wheat comes from the Middle East. It slowly spread northward and for some evolutionary reason, the British and Nordic people have the highest rate of wheat intolerance. On one side of my family I have Swedish ancestors, the other side Scottish. That's pretty much a solid combo of British and Nordic heritage. It also is genetic and my Mom told me that my Dad had wheat allergies. Along with wheat, one with an allergy should avoid bulgur, couscous, rye, barley and possibly oats. That explained the confusion I had when I knew I hadn't ate any bread or pasta in my meal yet the damn stomach pains and other problems would appear after I ate. I did a little experimenting, because, while I don't really miss bread or pasta too much, I love my pizza. Now I know that I can eat two medium sized slices once in awhile, or even a small bowl of pasta, as long as I make sure to avoid anything else with wheat in it for the next 42 hours. But it's not as if I have to avoid all grains from now on. Teff and millet and amaranth are fine, though I rarely eat them. And relief of all relieves. Rice is perfectly okay to eat ! Thank my lucky stars! I can get a tad lovey dovey over rice as you already read. I do not know for a fact if I am wheat intolerant but the symptoms are all there. They go away when I don't eat any wheat products. I know I should get tested for it. The only way to control celiac disease is to maintain a completely gluten-free diet.

My favorite place to eat right now is at "Rubio's Baja Taco Stand". It's a chain from San Diego. One opened up on Wilshire Boulevard, which is close to where I live, not too long ago. I'm addicted to the "health mex bean and rice burrito". \$2.79. Beans and rice with salsa fresco and chipotle sauce wrapped in a warm whole wheat tortilla. Wait...I just said I think I have a problem with wheat. What am I doing eating burritos then? Because...because they're sooo good! I don't eat them every day. Maybe once a week I indulge. Usually I order tacos. Corn tortillas. Corn tortillas rock! Masa baby!!!! I've

also been a fiend for portabello mushrooms. I've been making them every day for several weeks in a row now. I like them cooked very simply. Sautéed with a little onion powder, garlic salt and fresh black pepper. Too darn good!

I have read of the dangers of olestra and the fear was put into me immediately. Anal leakage my ass...hahaha...get the joke? "No such thing will ever enter my digestive system", I proclaimed. That is until I go see a movie ("The Beach" with that foxy French actress that made me drool...if you most know) with Sarah. She brought treats. Wow chips! Oh what the hell! A snack is a snack is a snack after all. I dug into the bag she offered me. One bite and that was all it took. "Hey...these are good!" Halfway through the bag and my butt wasn't leaking. I ate the rest. All was a-okay. I quizzed Sarah about any potential results. "They never caused me any anal leakage or other unpleasant consequences". Right on sistah! Give me the go ahead to completely pig out!!! The next day (a rainy day to be exact) I went grocery shopping. When you're single and bored you tend to go grocery shopping a lot. I was in the mood for snacks as I was in the middle of reading a biography of the Clash and one of the greatest pleasures I know of is eating yummy snacks while reading good books (I usually read biographies). I snatched up a bag of Wow Doritos. I was still weary, even fearful of, y'know, the leakage thing. I ate the whole bag anyways. The next day my intestines were going haywire. Like loco crazy. Like I ate 50 stuffed green peppers with black beans (ask anyone that knows me what I'm like the day after if I dared to eat two stuffed bell peppers!). They probably couldn't tell you as they already ran out of the room, covering their nose and screaming for mercy. Nothing was leaking out but boy oh boy...the intestines were twisting and cramping away. Sitting on the toilet was a frequent activity that day. The only suspect I could come up with was my snacks of olestra chips. They had to be the culprit. But did that stop me? NOPE! I kept on snacking. A challenge, so to speak. I worked my way up.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a bag is the limit.



I won! But not really...Wow chips have lately been so overly seasoned or salted that I can't deal with them. I asked Sarah about that and she agreed. "Would you rather have too many seasonings", I said, "or too little?" She said too much. I said too little. Taste buds, eh?

Not too long ago I had the pleasure of spending a week in the Detroit area. I found a huge used bookstore and in the cooking section my mouth literally dropped open. A stunned smile slowly emerged. Right there, before my feet, were eight boxes full of old cookbooks/pamphlets/product related recipe suggestions for the family that I so adore. Ice box salads, c'mon! Kebobs made with Spam and banana chunks. I walked away from that bookstore knowing I had a little sliver of heaven in my hands. That wasn't the only special thing Detroit had to offer me. I was staying with a couple of folks that I had been writing to for a number of years. Had I known that Any had the cooking talent to make any professional chef weep for their lack of skills I would have visited them many moons ago! Yep...superficial me...just for her cooking! I still daydream of the food I ate with them. Thank you Any!

Beer and the thrill of a train ride from good ole Fullerton to San Diego. About a two hour trip. While we were buying our tickets at the train station (I finally got to use my Triple A card for a discount on something!), Dolly (who has a killer eye for this kind of thing) spots a stack of coupons. For each day of the week the train has a special food offer if you present the coupon while making a food purchase. It was Friday. Fridays special was the best one of them all. Buy \$3 worth of food and/or beverages on the train and you'll get a little single serving bottle of wine. Okay. I doubted that there's much food of interest for me on an Amtrak. Paul points out they do have veggie burgers. But, no surprise here at all, they're out of 'em. Now let me veer slightly off of direction here. Why, and this has been proven countless times and witnessed by many others, when



there is both a meat and vegetarian option in a situation where it's the only food available...why oh why is it the veggie option that always runs out first??? It's not that fair. Take for example the last job I officially worked, which was on a soundstage. On the days that they filmed no one could leave their job to go get food. Food was brought in. Quite often it was pizza. Which pizzas were devoured first? Yep! You guessed it. Only the ones I could eat. And who were the culprits eating them? All the gosh darn meat eaters!!! Meat eaters can choose all the options, and obviously they enjoy the meat-less ones too. But us poor little veggies...now back to the train story. While waiting for the train Paul influences this little toddler to act like a spaz. The toddler keeps looking at Paul while STOMPING his left foot. We ate our train food while waiting (the train was running late). It was more like a snack. We each ate two pieces of sushi with baby corn, cucumber and carrots in it, and a container of edamame from Ralph's. It's not exactly the most stomach filling food. Finally the train arrives as the sun goes down. We found seats and made a beeline to the food car. All that was available to eat were cheeseburgers. See! I told you so! But there was cold beer! And not just any beer, but big ass bottles from the Stone Brewery (a San Diego microbrewery). Paul and I each bought a bottle (\$4.50...quite a reasonable price) and used the free wine coupon. So cool! Buy one booze get another more sophisticated booze for free! Dolly gets the wine. Chardonnay. We walked back to our seats. We drank. My beer was fantastic. The wine was a bit vinegary. Paul and I decided we needed more beer. He spots the Arrogant Bastard Ale. 8.1%. Holy moley I said. This is the one. If you're only gonna drink a couple (I love lying to myself and acting as if a 22 ounce bottle is but "one beer") you gotta make 'em count. So drink by alcohol percentage. More bang for the buck. Somewhere between my third and sixth sip I realized I was toasted. I tried to say something and only slurred words came out. This made me laugh. The oh so proud me who could drink like a walrus was actually feeling drunk on a couple of drinks. Happy flipping day! A few more sips I can't tell if

the train was moving or stopped. That I know because I was staring out the window wondering why the lights outside the train seemed to not be moving. Paul actually had to tell me, when I said something about how I couldn't figure out what was going on, that we were at a train stop, stopped.

Did you know that the world's most expensive coffee bean is gathered from the poop of a marsupial in Indonesia? Yep, you read that correctly. The poop. The marsupials climb about in coffee trees and only eat the ripest coffee cherries. Then the marsupial poops 'em back out. Voila! The world's most expensive coffee bean. It wholesales for about \$110 per pound, unroasted.

Want a free "lifetime" subscription to food geek? It's pretty easy. Just send me an old cookbook (1960's on down through the years). All these folks will now receive all future issues for free because they gave me an old cookbook or related item: Kerith, JB Thomas, Anne Thalheimer, Heather Seggel, Jerianne and Skuld. OR you can delight my sweet tooth and send me samples of your regional chocolate. All the major brands of candy bars in the U.S. suck and they are completely incapable of satisfying my chocolate cravings. Please! Tell me that a Snickers really satisfies. Or a Milky Way. They don't! They can't! And you lucky people in Canada and the UK... you have the Aero bar and Cadbury. Cadbury does make chocolate in America but it's second rate compared to the Cadbury products that I've found in other countries. So yes, Carrie says chocolate rules. And if you send me samples of your local/regional chocolate bars/confections you'll be put on the subscription-till-this-bites-the-big-one list.



## PURGE

I often catch myself luxuriating in memories of favorite meals. This is a new involuntary pass time for me, possibly brought about by the hot weather and the subsequent difficulty I have when trying to work up enthusiasm for cooking. Not that I was a rampant cook when the weather was cooler, but I *want* to be cooking now, my interest in cooking having emerged from that dark vacuum of instant gratification from which all my food impulses were originating these last few years. Or perhaps it's simply that Michael and I treat ourselves to meals in restaurants that I previously would have only stepped into for a special occasion or as the guest of someone who is habitually wealthy. It's lovely to have a mate who appreciates the entire dining experience, who can relax and converse and just be in a gracious atmosphere. A wonderful memory that both Michael and I frequently return to is a dinner we had at the Hotel Del Coronado in Coronado, California. We were spending the weekend in a suite in the old part of the hotel, and from our balcony we had a wide, clear view of the ocean (which was unfortunately too cold for swimming as we found out while chasing and tripping each other along the surf's edge). In addition to beautiful architecture and a very sweet scarcity of other non-holiday weekend merry makers, the hotel offers two 'fancy' (covered feet and flesh please, unless you're a lady, in which case you can show your skin if accessorized by expensive fabric or metal and stone/marine byproduct add-ons) restaurants. We chose the Prince of Wales (an ocean front grill) rather than the Crown-Coronet Room (regional French cuisine) mainly because the latter had a bar mitzvah-wedding-The Shining (Stephen King book) quality that I had no desire to take home as a memory. All right, I'll get on with it.

### The Food:

Small portions as you'll find in many of your finer restaurants, but exceptional in that each mouthful seemed to be the concentrated essence of its parts. Michael goes on and on about the flavor of the asparagus that was part of my vegetable plate; almost as if he's worried it was a delusion



and he needs my corroboration to believe that the taste had existed in his mouth. There were baby carrots, caramelized onions, mushrooms, garlic, fennel, squashes, green beans and, for me the high point of the food, a garlic-mashed potato dish with a crunchy, shredded potato outside that was what all potatoes aspire to after they die. I had ordered it mainly because it had a grandiose name (Stupendous or Glorious Tower . . . I can't remember) and I have to give things like that a chance. We shared a lovely bottle of wine (the name of which I've forgotten, as I forget all wine names), Michael had a fish of some sort which he enjoyed, while I was thankful it did not exude a dead fish feter, and for dessert something creamy-chocolate-mocha-whipped-maybe coconut (did I mention we shared a bottle of wine?).

You may be thinking this is rather sparse evidence to qualify as a favorite meal, but I say you lack a sense of romance if you think that. So many wonderful parts came together to create this meal, many of them having nothing whatsoever to do with my mouth. And I never said this was going to be a restaurant review.

#### Another great meal:

Several years ago, I moved to Australia to be with my then boyfriend. After being there for a few weeks, surrounded by nothing I could identify as mine, I was desperate for something American. I would listen to people talking and have to restrain myself from shouting, "Okay! Enough! Would you drop the fucking accent?!" Luckily, just in time, a very American business associate of my boyfriend came to spend Christmas in the southern hemisphere. His name is George. Smart, witty, handsomely blonde, and with a good dress sense. A breath of fresh air to my homesick being.

We were in Sydney and the boyfriend had business that had nothing to do with us, so George suggested diner somewhere along the harbor at a restaurant called, if I remember correctly, Stars. Not a name that says delicious dining experience to me. However, George had recommendations that he trusted; thus, we commenced the evening.

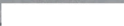
The restaurant was large, open to the wharf, noisy, crowded, and

brimming with attitude. I was a little worried. We were seated at a table for two smack in the center of the room with tables close on every side. We ordered vodka martinis then perused the menu. Fish, fish, fish, fish, ostriches, kangaroos... truffles. I had never eaten truffles. Here they were. It was the season. And served not on pasta as I'd so often seen it offered and thought to myself, "Hmm, too bad about the pasta," pasta being a starch I'm not enamored of. These truffles were to be served shaved over a delicately (not greasy diner style) fried egg. Now, before I go further, let me clarify that I am not talking about chocolate truffles. This has nothing to do with Godiva, See's, etc. These truffles are, I quote Webster's, "the dark and rugose edible subterranean fruiting body of several European ascomycetous fungi (genus Tuber)." (Rugose "1: full of wrinkles 2: having veinlets sunken and the spaces between elevated") Now would you pass that up?

George was happily appalled that I had never tasted truffles, and waxed on about the glories of such a marvel. We both ordered the dish. When it arrived, its musty scent having proceeded our waiter, I pondered its simplicity. Then I wondered if I had made a serious error in ordering this. But George looked ecstatic and I'm game, so I put a piece in my mouth, and I may have moaned. I couldn't make the dish last long enough. At the end I was full, but I wanted more, more, more. I didn't want to leave the table. In order to do so, I had to promise myself I would eat truffles whenever possible - this would not be my sole truffle experience! Sadly, this turned out to be a lie. I have yet to wallow in truffles for second time.

George and I went on to visit the small carnival that was a short walk down the pier, enjoying our American-ness and discovering that carnival rides after martinis are not necessarily the good time they would seem to be.

That's just two meals. I have more to tell you about, but first I ask that you share a few with me. Please write to:

@hotmail.com

I'd be happy to hear about very bad meals as well.

HELGA'S RESTAURANT IDEA #1

Oaklin'

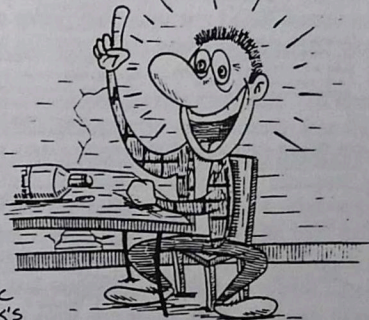
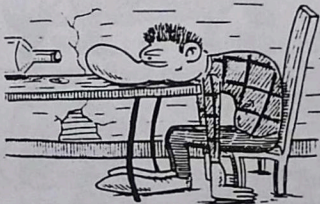
# Jacks Flapjack Shack

FINE FAMILY DINING SINCE 1999



IT'S 3 A.M. - YOU'RE SHITFACED  
AGAIN, YOUR GIRLFRIEND WON'T  
FUCK YOU, AND YOU'RE HANKERING  
FOR SOME HEARTY CHOW!

SUDDENLY, IT OCCURS TO YOU -  
"BY, GUM! I'LL GO TO  
OAKLIN' JACK'S FLAPJACK SHACK!"



LOCATED IN THE HEART OF HISTORIC  
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, OAKLIN' JACK'S  
HAS BEEN PROUDLY SERVING THE CITY'S  
FINEST SINCE ITS INCEPTION TWO  
WEEKS AGO!

IT WAS FOUNDED BY A REALLY  
BORED PERSON WHO HAD NOTHING  
BETTER TO DO THAN THINK UP  
STUPID RESTAURANT NAMES -



OAKLIN' JACK

BY GUM! I'LL CALL IT OAKLIN' JACK'S FLAPJACK SHACK!





AND JUST WHAT MAKES EATING AT  
OAKLIN' JACK'S FLAPJACK SHACK  
SUCH A MEMORABLE DINING  
EXPERIENCE? FOR STARTERS, YOU  
CAN'T BEAT OUR ILLUSTRIOUS MENU!  
HERE ARE BUT A FEW HIGHLIGHTS -

OR HOW ABOUT OUR FAMOUS ALL-  
ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT PANCAKE BUFFET?  
CHOOSE FROM 25 SELECTIONS DAILY -  
AT AN INCOMPARABLE \$5.99!



**FAT BACK STACK**  
2 1/2 entire pounds of USDA  
certified lard is blended  
into our famous house batter!



**GUTS N' EGGS**

Chopped bits of giblets, brains,  
uteri, cinderlings, gizzards, and  
more are stirred into our famous  
house batter, served with two  
eggs, any style - it's 'offally' good!



**STEAK 'N STACK**  
Three steaks dipped in our  
famous house batter and  
cooked on our outdoor grill!

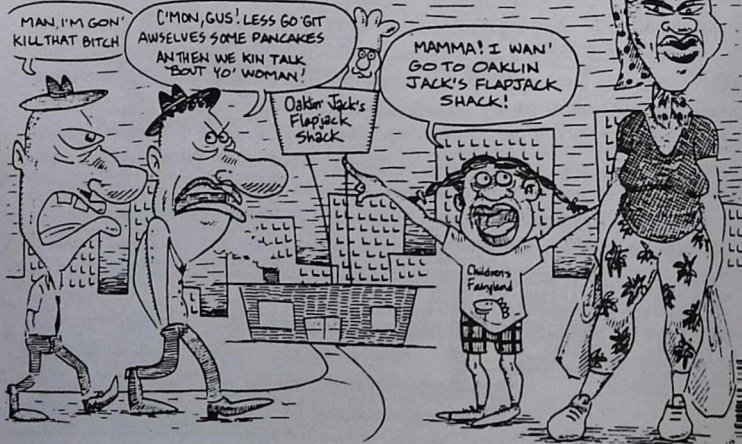


**GRAB BAG SPECIAL**

For the adventurous pancake  
eater - we guarantee that the  
finest leftovers (24 hours fresh)  
end up in your stack! All stirred  
into our famous house batter.



BUT PEOPLE MOSTLY FLOCK TO OAKLIN' JACK'S FLAPJACK FOR ITS  
WARM, CONGENIAL FAMILY ATMOSPHERE - AND YOU SHOULD TOO!



# Adventures in the Supermarket Express Line

By Eric Lyden

OK, so I'm at the supermarket buying myself supper. I think I was buying some prepackaged bagel pizzas which I find to be quite yummy, and a 16 ounce bottle of Coke because those fascist pigs don't sell 16 ounce bottles of Dr. Pepper. Oh sure, they sell the 2 liter bottles but they aren't cold, and I'm hungry so I don't have time to wait for the soda to get cold and I hate using ice because the ice always melts and I can't stand having watered down soda. But all of this is totally besides the point. Well, not all of it. The fact that I'm in a hurry plays a very important role in this little story. So I have my bagel pizzas and my little bottle of soda in one of those baskets and I head to the front of the store.

When I get to the front of the store I see there's only one "10 items or less" lines open. That's the line I get into because I have less than ten items. So I get into the line, and I notice that the guy in front of me has a whole shopping cart filled with stuff. Now I am not an unreasonable person; if this guy would've had eleven or twelve items I'd have no problem. But this dude had a whole shopping cart filled with shit. Now if there is one thing that drives me bug fuckin' nuts in this world it is people who can't follow simple instructions and I can't imagine a more simple rule than "10 items or less". I read about people singing the praises of anarchy- well let me ask you this- how can we trust people to govern themselves if they can't even be counted on to obey simple rules like "10 items or less"? Or does anarchy mean we abolish supermarket express lanes? If that's the case you can count me out, my friend. No laws are one thing, no express lines...that's just crazy talk, man, crazy talk.

Only one express lane is open and I'm stuck behind this jack off with a cart full of shit. What should I do here? See, I'm a pussy. I am not what you would call assertive, especially when it comes to dealing with strangers. But dammit, I'm hungry and I'm in a hurry so I muster up some courage and say those two little words- "ummm...excuse me."



"Eh?" was his thoughtful response.

"This is a 10 items or less line."

"?Que?"

He doesn't speak English. Well that's his problem. You're in the United States, you follow the rules of the United States. I very politely but firmly explain to this fellow that he has too many items to get into this line. Somehow he understood what I was saying, gives an apologetic nod, and gets in another line. I celebrate privately for a moment. For once in my life I was assertive. I was assertive and none of my fears came true. I don't know what I was afraid of, but it didn't happen. There I was basking in my own glory when I heard a voice from in front of me say "You should've let him go."

"Huh?" I said quite baffled.

"You should've let him go" said the man in front of me who was the guy in front of the Spanish guy who had all the shit in his cart "he didn't know. He didn't speak English. You gotta be nice to people." Well that's easy for him to say because he was in front of this guy and wasn't going to be held up. Then the guy in front of this guy gets in on the act.

"Yeah, I'd've let him go. No skin off my ass."

Well I'm not sure what that had to do with anything, but 30 seconds ago I was so damn proud of myself for standing up for myself, and now I had two Massholes (folks from Massachusetts) giving me shit for it and making me feel like I had shattered some immigrant's vision of the American dream. Like he's going to go back to his home country and tell everyone how this asshole kicked him out of line at the supermarket. I swear to you, I thought I was going to cry. I walked out to my car feeling like an asshole but having learned a valuable lesson- never be assertive, never stand up for yourself, just lie there like a lump and take any and all shit from anyone and everyone. There are some people in this world who are meant to be doormats, and I guess I'm one of them. When I buy a house everyone reading this is invited to bring your dogs over so they can shit in my yard. It's gonna happen anyway, I might as well invite it. It's easier that way. And I guess that would be the depressing moral to this depressing little story.



And now, **the poor gourmet**  
presents:

# tomater Sandwich

a taste o' italy

I may not be a  
chef, but I play  
one in this  
comic.

NOT  
LUKE  
PERRY

## ★ U WILL NEED :

1 tomato  
fresh (or powdered) garlic  
olive oil & vinegar (or Italian Dressing)  
pepper, basil, oregano, parsley  
(or "Italian Seasoning" from the spice rack)  
knife & spoon  
a bowl  
bread (pref. a hard roll or sub roll, it's SLOPPY!)

Chop up tomato (either sliced or cubed.) Chop up  
a little bit o' the garlic. Throw both into the bowl.  
Put a dash of each spice (not TOO much!) into the  
bowl. Pour in enough of the oil & vinegar (equal parts)  
to "lubricate" the ingredients. Now mix it all up!  
Put the mixture on the bread and enjoy!

MAKES 1-2 SANDWICHES

★ **OPTION 1:** Put a couple o' slices o' cheese on!

★ **OPTION 2:** Add some spinach into the mix.  
This is how I usually make it!

This sandwich looks deceptively simple, but take  
it from me, it is **mm mmm tasty!**

★ SHAWN GRANTON ★ *tfr* ★ MARCH 2000

# éclair eulogy

FOR ANNE  
KATHERINE  
LINDBERG  
WILLIAMS

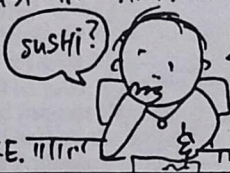
by anne, may 2k

RECENTLY I WENT TO THE GROCERY ON A WHIM.



I NEEDED  
FOOD,  
BUT HAD PUT  
THE TRIP  
OFF FOR A  
WHILE, BEING BROKE.

BUT PAYDAY SNUCK UP ON ME (!) + OFF I WENT, LIST IN HAND.



SOMETIMES PEOPLE IN THE GROCERY CREEP ME OUT...



OK. THAT'S 20¢ CHEAPER, BUT THAT'S ON SALE, SO...



YES, I REALLY DO THAT.

BUT THIS TRIP TURNED OUT TO BE VERY COOL.

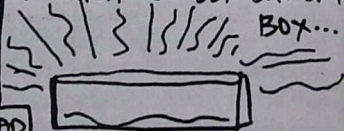
OR I FIND MYSELF INDECISIVE.

THE STORE MARKS DOWN THEIR NEAR-TO-SELL-BY-DATE BAKERY STUFF PRETTY DRASTICALLY.

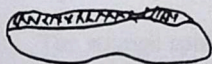


180¢ LOAF OF POTATO BREAD

AND THEN I SPIED THEM, IN THEIR GLOSSY BAKERY BOX...



...ÉCLAIRS.



I NEVER GO LOOKING  
FOR ÉCLAIRS.



AND I  
ALMOST  
NEVER  
EAT  
THEM.

THE LAST ONE I ATE MUST  
HAVE BEEN ABOUT 15 YEARS AGO.



ÉCLAIRS?

MY MOM'S MOM,  
WHO WAS LIVING  
WITH US,  
**LOVED 'EM.**

THIS IS THE  
WOMAN I AM  
NAMED AFTER

ANY TIME ANY OF US  
LEFT THE HOUSE,  
SHE'D ASK US TO  
BRING ÉCLAIRS BACK.

ME AT AGE 10



UH, OKAY,  
GRAM.

STRANGELY,  
WE ALWAYS  
DID.

SHE HAD ALZHEIMERS,  
AND FREQUENTLY MISTOOK  
US FOR ONE ANOTHER,  
OR HER SIBLINGS, OR  
SPOKE IN OTHER LANGUAGES  
SHE'D LEARNED.



chew  
chew

SHE  
ALSO  
PLAYED  
A  
FIERCE  
HARMONICA

BUT ÉCLAIRS SHE RECOGNIZED.

SO I BOUGHT THE BOX,  
BROUGHT IT HOME, AND  
ATE AN ÉCLAIR WHILE  
THINKING OF MY MOM'S MOM.



HERE'S TO  
YOU,  
GRAM.

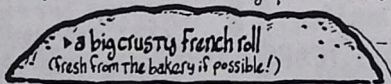
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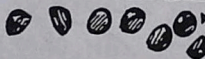
Uncle Andy's guide to

# This Sandwich I Just Made Up!

~introductory note: My friend Rachel told me about a sandwich she made involving grapes, sliced cucumbers, pepper jack cheese, and crunchy chow mein noodles! I have yet to try that combo myself (she just invented it yesterday) but I was intrigued by the idea of a sandwich with grapes in it. Here's what I came up with:

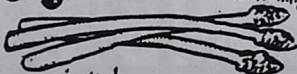


▶ a big crusty French roll  
(fresh from the bakery if possible!)



▶ seedless grapes (sliced in half to keep 'em from rolling around)

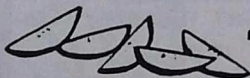
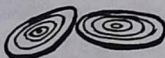
▶ seared asparagus  
(see sidebar)



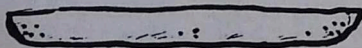
▶ pepper jack cheese (vegans may want to skip this part. But it seems to me that Tofu Spam [see Food Geek #1] would be a good substitute.)



▶ thinly sliced red onion



▶ maybe some thinly sliced apples!



~and voila! (actually I wouldn't slice the bread all the way through, but it makes for a clearer drawing)

Does that sound yummy or what? I wanna go make one right now!

♥, Androo 2000

## How to sear asparagus:

Put a little oil (I'm talkin' like a dollop the size of a quarter) in a heavy pan (I use my trusty iron skillet), spread it around and heat it WAY up. (You want to cook hot-n-fast here). Rinse raw asparagus, cut off the ends (not the spears; the other ends) and toss the stalks into the skillet. Roll 'em around while sprinkling with salt-n-pepper. You want 'em to turn bright green with dark streaks still crisp. This takes less than a minute, so keep your eye on 'em. Nummy!

## Green Tomatoes, Fried and Otherwise

By Heather Seggel

The strange sprawl of weather that calls itself summer in Cazadero is enough to make you reach for earmuffs in July. Sonoma County prides itself on having Mediterranean “microclimates”—many different regions and weather systems all grouped fairly close together. They’re a great blessing for agriculture, ‘cause you can grow all kinds of yummy things like wine grapes, and hey, cut down those apple trees and we’ll plant some more wine grapes. And it can be fun passing through full sun, then dense fog, then mild rain, then end up in the sun again on a 20 mile bus ride. But this summer has been entirely too schizoid for me, and not sunny enough at all! I don’t think God realizes that back in June when I said I was working on my deathly pallor, it was meant as a JOKE! I need light to keep from losing my mind. And my neighbor needs sunlight or her tomatoes won’t ripen, and she’ll keep bringing me green ones. On second thought, maybe a little more fog is okay...

I love green tomatoes. They bookend summer so sweetly, from the first few that grow big on the vine, then dig their heels in and refuse to mature, to the final holdouts that signal season’s end in late September. With their strange, earthy-tart smell and sour taste when raw, you wouldn’t think of them as being on the front lines in your armory of recipes to seduce and enchant, but oh! My dears! That’s where you’re remiss. Green tomatoes are the culinary equivalent of a Vaudeville performer—strikingly talented in a number of roles, with more kick than their high-falutin’ counterparts. Plus, when you fry them they taste like pussy. But I digress...

If you put up tomato sauces in the summer, consider making some green tomato relish. It’s got a flavor that will blow your tongue’s mind, like hearing a haiku for the first time—there’s a sense of distance to it, of heaven and earth in one. And it’s wonderful on hot



dogs. Green tomatoes are also fine in chutney or in their own curry, with onions and chickpeas and the freshest garam masala you can find. I've seen them baked into a savory pie at a farmer's market. There are few roles a green tomato can't play at your table, and it's worthwhile to try several variations, but don't neglect the classics. Slice them thin, dredge the slices in cornmeal with salt and pepper, and fry in hot fat until they get brown all over and soft in the middle. Serve with toast and eggs, or just a plateful solo and dream. The heat tempers the sour taste and brings out this lovely salinity and a substantial, meaty texture. It's not unheard of to serve them with milk gravy over them, but that strikes me as overkill. You want to bite through that thin cornmeal crust and taste the hot, sea-watery juices inside, the taste of summers at the shore and deep kisses under the pier. They taste like the sensation of hunger itself—remind yourself that you ate them afterward, or you'll start making another breakfast and ruin your appetite. And enjoy your summer memories.

## Poor Eating in New Orleans

By Emily Greenwalt

A couple of years ago, my friend Stephanie and I were living in New Orleans. We were both unemployed, and the money I had brought with me had long been spent on the rent, which was \$600 a month. Although I am normally a really good cook and I love food, resources were obviously limited and luxuries like food took a backseat to beer (which we also couldn't afford, but it was easier to flirt a beer out of someone than a dinner). The result was a freakish diet we both created.

Most of the time, we would ride bikes to the grocery store with our backpacks and about seven dollars each. I had given up on being vegan out of desperation. We would part ways and pick up our basket with bread, three-for-a-dollar cans of veggies, margarine

(which we also used as cooking oil because it was cheaper--trust me, don't try it, it doesn't really work) and rice. Sometimes, Stephanie's parents would come in town and buy onions, cereal, potatoes and soda. Anyway, luxuries like presweetened drink mix (we couldn't afford sugar), cheese, beer, avocados, etc. we would stick down the pants. Then, we'd load up the groceries in our packs and ride home. There was a corner store up the street from our house, so if we were desperate for soda or candy, we'd walk up there.

Because our supply of food was sparse and varied, we'd often end up with only bread and candy in the house. Many were a time we'd stumble in, drunk, and make sandwiches of bread and chips (which actually is pretty good—I still make 'em), or once Stephanie had a jelly bean sandwich. Funny thing is, New Orleans is known for food, but I think I ate out like once while I lived there.

So this one time, Steph and I were walking down the street in the quarter, and this fuckin' guy walks up and is like, "are you girls hungry?" and we're like "fuk yeah!" so he says, "why don't you let me take you back to my house and I'll make you some meat sandwiches." "Huh?" I say, "we don't eat meat," and he says, "well what kind of sandwiches do you like?" and we looked at each other and say "jelly bean sandwiches, chip sandwiches." He was like, huh?? And we got freaked out because I'm pretty sure he was talking about sex or something, so we laughed hysterically and ran off down the street.

The best time was when I worked at a Haagen Das and Stephanie worked at Kokopell's (a burrito place) and I would bring home ice cream and she would bring home burritos and we would feast for free. I also stole coffee (good stuff), fruit and soda from work. Down the street from our house was a bakery, and sometimes we would dumpster bagels there. One time we went there and there were like ten bags of bread and bagels and we brought home such a mad load of bagels. We called it the great bagel kill of '98.



# *Death by Soup...*



to: carrie.....from: billy

The story you are about to read is 100% true. Please continue with caution.

4 Years ago I saw a girl in my local grocery store who was in my painting class at the community college.

She noticed me and invited me to her crib for dinner. I had a crush on this beautiful girl all semester so I was obviously all for it.

When we got to her house, she opened a can of condensed tomato soup and (without adding the one can of water to it) dumped it into a pot. She then proceeded to add an entire stick of butter, chopped up garlic cloves, and a cup of nacho cheese.

She stirred this witches brew slowly while making idle conversation with me. Meanwhile, my heart was beating rapidly with terror, knowing the inevitable fate that would soon befall us both.

She brought out 2 bowls and split the thick gruel between us, of course making sure to give me the larger portion.

I want all of you readers of "Food Geek" to realize that the worst food you have ever eaten would be considered a delicacy by me in relation to the excruciating pain and discomfort that engulfed the next 15 minutes of my life.

The luke warm tomato gravy made its descent down my esophagus at such a slow rate, that today (4 long years later) I am convinced it is still traveling thru my lower intestines.

Anyhow, It was at that moment in time that I made a terrible, terrible mistake.

I told her, I loved it.

I dated this girl for a month and a half. We went to a carnival, arcades, movies, and I actually forced myself to eat this poop on two more occasions!

Needless to say, when things didn't work out between us, the situation was easy to digest!



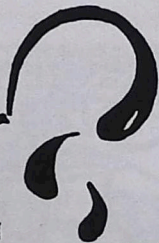
**The End !**





# Food Freak.

delaine.



BLOPP

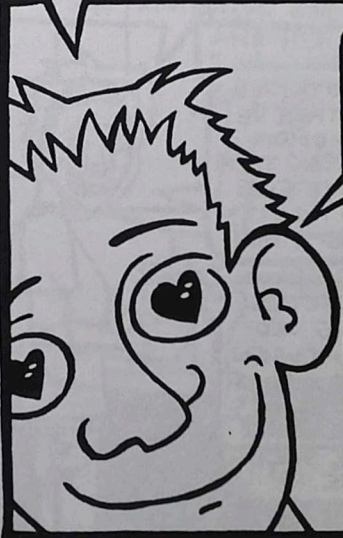
I WORKED AT **BURGER KING** in 1990 - EVEN THOUGH I HATE HAMBURGERS (I've ONLY EATEN ABOUT 5 IN MY WHOLE LIFE)



My cute punk co-workers and I entertained ourselves by drawing on the burgers with ketchup or mustard before serving them.

# HOW TO MAKE "BAZAARI ALOO" LIKE CARRIE

MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH INDIAN FOOD BEGAN MANY YEARS AGO WHEN I FIRST BECAME A VEGETARIAN. ALL INDIAN RESTAURANTS SERVE VEGETARIAN DISHES. "WHY?" ONE MIGHT ASK. INDIA HAS A LARGE VEGETARIAN POPULATION, HENCE THE NEED FOR A SCRUMPTIOUS CUISINE THAT ACCOMMODATES A MEAT-LESS DIET. I FREQUENTLY USE THE WORD CURRY WHEN I TALK ABOUT INDIAN FOOD. "CURRY" ACTUALLY COMES FROM THE BRITISH, NOT INDIA. IT'S A VAGUE TERM BUT GENERALLY REFERS TO ANY DISH THAT HAS A SAUCE AND/OR IS STEWLIKE.



IF YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE INDIAN FOOD PLEASE DON'T USE ALREADY MIXED CURRY POWDER. IT SUCKS. BUY THE SPICES INDIVIDUALLY. IT'S WORTH THE EXTRA MONEY. BUY THE FRESHEST SPICES YOU CAN FIND. FRESHNESS MAKES A BIG TASTE DIFFERENCE. IF YOU'RE IN LUCK, LIKE ME, YOU LIVE BY AN INDIAN GROCERY STORE. GO! TAKE A DEEP WHIFF AS YOU WALK INSIDE. IT'S PURE PLEASURE FOR THE NOSE. THE SMELL OF ALL THE SPICES COMBINE INTO A PERFECT PERFUME. NOTHING SMELLS BETTER.

**INGREDIENT  
LIST  
Your SPICES:**

**ASAFETIDA  
8 FENUGREEK  
SEEDS**

**½ TSP CUMIN  
SEEDS**

**½ TSP FENNEL  
SEEDS**

**¼ TSP KALONJI**

**¼ TSP BROWN  
MUSTARD SEEDS**

**1 BAY LEAF**

**¼ TSP CAYENNE**  
**Your VEGGIES:**

**4 GARLIC CLOVES**

**1 TBS GINGER**

**1 MED. ONION**

**2 TOMATOES**

**2 POTATOES**

**1 LB OF Your  
CHOICE OF VEGGIES**

**SUCH AS PEAS,**

**SPINACH, CARBOZZOS,**

**CARROTS OR**

**CAULIFLOWER**

**A LEMON**

KALONJI IS BLACK  
ONION SEEDS.  
ASAFETIDA IS A  
PUNGENT RESIN  
SIMILAR TO ONIONS.

**TAKE YOUR POTATOES (ALOO) AND  
PLOP THEM INTO BOILING WATER.  
BOIL THEM UNTIL FORK TENDER.**

**WHILE THE POTATOES BOIL  
PUT THE GARLIC AND GINGER  
INTO A BLENDER WITH ABOUT  
3 TBS OF WATER. BLEND  
INTO A PASTE. IF YOU DON'T  
HAVE A BLENDER CHOP 'EM  
UP REALLY FINE.**

**MEASURE OUT THE FENUGREEK, CUMIN,  
FENNEL, KALONJI, MUSTARD SEEDS  
AND A BAY LEAF. MIX IN SMALL BOWL.  
THIS IS THE "SPICE MIXTURE".**

**PEEL POTATOES  
WHEN THEY'VE  
COOLED DOWN  
AND BREAK THEM  
INTO BITE SIZE  
PIECES. NOW IT'S  
COOKING TIME!**

**HEAT VEGETABLE  
OIL USING MED-  
HIGH HEAT. WHEN  
HOT ADD A PINCH  
OF ASAFETIDA.  
SECONDS LATER  
ADD THE SPICE  
MIXTURE.**





THE MUSTARD SEEDS WILL START TO POP AND LAND ALL OVER YOUR STOVE. THIS IS THE SIGN TO ADD THE ONION. STIR AND FRY TILL THE ONION STARTS TO BROWN.

NOW ADD THE GARLIC AND GINGER PASTE AND FRY FOR ABOUT 5 MINUTES. STIR IT FREQUENTLY.

ADD THE TOMATOES. COOK FOR ANOTHER 5 MINUTES.

NOW IT'S TIME TO THROW IN YOUR VEGGIES ALONG WITH ABOUT  $1\frac{3}{4}$  CUPS WATER, CAYENNE,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  TSP SALT AND FRESH SQUEEZED LEMON JUICE ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  TSP). BRING TO SIMMER. COVER AND LOWER HEAT.

COOK FOR 15-25 MINUTES OR UNTIL THE SAUCE THICKENS. ADD 1 TSP GARAM MASALA AND GIVE IT A GOOD STIR!

GARNISH WITH CILANTRO AND EAT!

DON'T FORGET TO MAKE BASMATI RICE WITH THIS!

RECIPE IS STOLEN FROM MADHUR JAFFREY. IF I EVER GET MY FOOD FANTASY (A SHOW ON FOOD NETWORK) I WOULD COOK A HUGE MEAL WITH HER. SIGH...

## Celebrity Chef Crushes (i.e. Carrie Has A Crush On A Celebrity Chef!)

Here I shall tell you a secret that I've kept to myself. It's about a crush. A crush I have on a celebrity chef. Yes...A crush! So damn unpredictable. One second you're looking at someone and thinking nothing, the next second you realize the way she just laughed, that smile, the way her fingers move and...and...the seeds of a crush are planted. This crush started back in March of 1998 when I was house sitting at a friends of a friends house. They had satellite TV. I didn't. I didn't even have basic cable. My big exciting thrill of the evening was to get comfy and make an evening of watching television, which was quite easy as the couch was built for a serious sports addict (which explained the satellite TV). I had my party food, a fresh hot bag of tortilla chips and tons of salsa from Poquito Mas. I scrutinized their fine selection of liquor (not a bargain brand to be seen!) and I made myself an Absolut and soda. Then I spotted a bottle of my favorite vodka, Ketel One in the freezer. Triple distilled and charcoal-filtered. Rumor has it this cuts down on the hangover effect. Whenever I drink vodka I tend to get hung over because I don't realize the strength of the drinks I mixed until I wake up the next day with that booming, throbbing headache in my eye. I had heard about the Food Network and was quite excited that I'd finally have a chance to watch it. Cooking shows on PBS had been my secret thrill for years. I made sure to always be home at 5:30 pm Monday through Friday to catch that ½ hour of cooking programming. If not, my dear VCR recorded it for me. And now an entire channel dedicated to cooking shows? Oh, shoot me. Dreams rarely seem to come true like this. I excitedly clicked away at the channels and then there it was, right in front of my



face. The Food Network! Ready...Set...Cook! I sat there captivated. Watching the chefs trying to out cook each other with the ingredients they were given, in a certain amount of time. I got another drink. The Two Hot Tamales came up next. I knew who they were! I used to live down the street from a restaurant of theirs called the City Cafe on Melrose. I remember the City Cafe because every time I walked by the place with a friend named Ed, he would go into a ten minute rant about the women chefs being dykes. I didn't pay much attention. Ed was one of those folks who fixated on strangers (in the form of celebrities) sexuality. The kind of person that likes to claim Tom Cruise is gay even though he's not. You get the picture. I remember inspecting the menu posted at City Cafe. The food sounded magnificent. But back in those days a \$3 burrito was a splurge. Too eat at an actual restaurant? Not exactly a real possibility for me back in those days. I can't remember what the Two Hot Tamales made for me that night on TV. What I do remember was watching the short one with dark hair. "Hey, I bet she's gay" I said to myself. A crush was born. She had that... that...something. See...in my entire adult life I've always wanted to go out with someone older than me. It still hasn't happened (unless you count a one night stand or two, which I don't). And Susan...she's cute and older and...wow! Okay. Fast forward to now. I recently picked up the LA Weekly. It had a Whole Foods insert in it. Grand opening at the corner of Fairfax and Santa Monica! Damn! That's where the Alpha Beta from hell was! It was the bleakest, ugliest, most depressing grocery store I'd ever been in! Now it's a Whole Foods? I flip the insert over to read the magic words...."Grand opening week with special celebrity chefs...". No way! I can meet her! In person! I looked forward to that special upcoming Wednesday afternoon at 4 pm. The week slowly drags by. Who



would've thought that it was my car out to blow my love life!!!!?

The very day of the in store appearance my car would not start. The engine refuses to turn over. Out of gas? Nope. Dead battery? Not so lucky. I made use of my Triple A card. "My car won't start", I practically cry to the women that answered the phone. They send over a tow truck driver. He couldn't figure it out either. It certainly isn't the obvious, whatever the problem is. He has no clue either. My car is towed to the service center just down the street. The bad news comes to me two hours later. My car was going nowhere, which meant I wouldn't be going to the in-store appearance! Of ALL days for my car to decide to break down! The engine needed to be overhauled. It would be three weeks in the shop. The repair bill wasn't exactly cheap. But on the up side the engine is like new again. Fate has made her mind up for me. I am not to meet Susan. It's a crush that will have to remain a crush. That's my life story in the romance department. I know some details about her now too. Like she is from Toledo, Ohio from a Russian Jewish family. That she was once married and her ex-husband is now her cooking partner Mary Sue Milliken's husband. That she is indeed gay and is in a steady relationship. Damn it! Well...I guess it was a good thing my car refused to take me to Whole Foods that day. I would've made a fool of myself...trying to charm her with my sweet goofy smile. But, you know what? I still haven't dined at any of her restaurants. Ciudad in downtown L.A. sounds good, Latin cuisine. I must plan a special event. The thought of it makes butterflies in my stomach appear. Someday soon I will eat at one of her restaurants! Maybe she'll be in the kitchen that night and I'll get to catch a glimpse of her in the flesh...sigh!

## LETTERS

I have a Mamoun's story of my own: In 1986 I had mono. I went to Mamoun's and ordered an iced coffee. The guy brought it to me plain, so I asked for milk. He brought me a little paper cup of milk. I added some to my coffee, but there was some left over. "Oh, well," I thought, "they're probably going to charge me for this milk anyway. I might as well drink it." After I finished it off, the guy came back to ask me if I was done with it. When I said that I was, he took the paper cup...REFILLED IT...AND GAVE IT TO SOMEBODY ELSE! So if there was a mononucleosis epidemic at Yale that year I was surely involved.

PETER CONRAD, CALIFORNIA

Here's something I like to do: I take pizza dough and wrap it around little cubes of mozzarella and make little balls. Then I boil them in tomato sauce. Pizza dumplings. Mmm!

STEVIE HARTMAN, NEW YORK

Yes, I too know the pleasure of finding that the supermarket has discounted pak choi greens, and that the arrival of a new kind of noodle interests me more than a new record by my favorite artiste! I 'spose that makes me, as we say in England, a foodie! What I loved about the zine, was that it showed just how different USA and UK is, despite a similarish language. I mean, what da fuck are jalapeno peppers? And I think what you call cilantro we call coriander. Basically there is no indigenous English food worth eating, most of it consists of animal entrails.

JOE, ENGLAND

I'm trying to think of things that are odd and unique to here. They make lamb chips and beef chips (i.e. bits of mashed up meat squashed into the shape of chunky french fries)...I don't know how weird that is, but the adverts have all these children who are so happy it's creepy, saying stuff like "mmmmm, so delicious!" in



really forced, reading-from-cards voices. Gives me the willies.  
ANNETTE CLUNIE, NEW ZEALAND

I love salsa too. I mix it with my rice every time and it makes everyone howl. Add it on 33 cent frozen burrito: 100% better burrito. It's a miracle substance. I should experiment more. Maybe I will make a Mexican lasagna with a salsa and cheese filling.  
DELAINE DERRY, ALABAMA

Interesting Buddhist veggie news: my mom says the nuns at her temple are not allowed to eat onions or green onions because they emit a strong scent. Perhaps they smell too much like body odor and are considered animal beings?  
DOLLY LIN, CALIFORNIA

One of the perfect things about making really good food is that's it's impossible to feel badly eating it! Seriously, active bulimics do not cook-it's hard to be motivated. Well, anorexics cook, and they think they're really good at it, but they don't know. Fresh salsa saves lives, I just can't prove it...yet.  
HETAIRA, OREGON

I am an incredibly picky and particular eater, easily grossed out by foods others deem yummy. Reading about things like tofu spam and "extra cilantro!" (yuck) makes me queasy in a car wreck sort of way. I could not look away, I had to continue. When I say I am a "particular eater" I mean I like the things I like made in a certain way, even down to presentation, and I will fuss and fret if it's not done exactly as I would do it. One of my favorite meals was Campbell's chunky chili beef soup over white rice with grated cheese. The first time my boyfriend made it for me he mixed it all together and I nearly had a conniption fit. It must be layered! Sadly, the soup has been discontinued so one of my favorite meals is no more. When I make cheeseburgers they must be perfectly round and of an even thickness. My pickiness, I think, comes from



my father force-feeding me things as a child that I knew I didn't like (such as corned beef hash, and currents in my oatmeal), yet would go hungry or get whipped if I didn't eat. As an adult I am afforded the luxury of avoiding anything that I even *\*think\** I might not like. This has backfired on occasion, like when Brian convinced me to try falafel and I LOVED it. Now I make perfect falafel balls! From a box mix, yes, but my frying is beautiful. I still hate hummus though. I am perfectly happy with my eating habits. I like what I like and rarely try new things because my track record so far has been that 9 times out of 10 I'll hate it.

ERICKA BAILIE, MINNESOTA

Falafel enchiladas are just enchiladas but instead of chicken or whatever people normally put in enchiladas we make falafel balls and use them instead. We often use falafel mix in Mexican food instead of mince.

MOIRA CLUNIE, NEW ZEALAND

I remembered what I was supposed to tell you. How to make Ethiopian Lentil Stew (Shiro Wat)...so...take 2 cups of brown lentils and rinse 'em and pick out the rocks. Cover with 2 inches of water in a pot and boil and simmer for 45 minutes or until they are super soft. Mash with a fork and set aside. Now, chop up 2 or 3 cloves of garlic and one small onion and one or two fresh red chilies (or if you forget to buy them like I do, use a big squirt of Thai rooster sauce). Sauté the garlic, onion and chile in oil until they're nice and soft and the chile fumes make your lungs hurt really bad. Now stir in the lentils and cook 8-10 minutes to blend the taste. It's good with rice in tortillas, or let it get cold and spread on Ak-Mak crackers. It's super-simple but super-tasty.

HEATHER SEGCEL, CALIFORNIA

## Violet Jones' Home-Fried Potatoes for Anytime (but Breakfast is Best)

I get up, at a reasonably early hour lately, I make motions of deference to my coffee-maker, I glaze over to the kitchen table and wait. Then I grab 2 or 3 potatoes from a bag, wash them off with a newly-awakened vigor, chop them in half and then each half lengthwise, then slice them thinly (I LOVE SKIN) and place the pieces in a bowl. I put a little bit of water in the bowl, a plate over the bowl, and the bowl in the nuke-oven for 8 minutes on full IRRADIATE settings. I pour coffee, drink it black, chop up a half-onion, maybe a pepper or garlic if I am feeling particularly energetic. Also a heavy pan on the burner at full blast warming up. DING! A medium circle of olive oil in the hot pan, and the potato-bowl is out of the microwave (BEWARE-HOT STEAM) and I tilt the bowl over the sink to drain excess water through the space where the plate is pulled back a smidge. More coffee after the potatoes are in the pan, but I keep them moving at first, then the other stuff goes in. I am not shy with salt/pepper/garlic powder/basil/tarragon, whatever. I let them cook real good-they cannot be overcooked but they can burn. As a bonus I may sprinkle grated parmesan in the last two minutes...NO KETCHUP REQUIRED (try Tabasco-ouch!)